

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 CU-02 /083 W

-----221915Z 040115 /50

R 221457Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7154

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 1358

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJECT: SECURITY POLICE ARREST BPC ACTIVISTS

1. MARCH 22 PRESS REPORTED THAT HONORARY PRESIDENT OF BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION (BPC) AND FOUNDER OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENT'S ORGANIZATION (SASO), STEVE BIKO, WAS ARRESTED BY SECURITY POLICE DURING EVENING MARCH 21 IN KING WILLIAM'S TOWN. ACCORDING TO PRESS, BIKO ARRESTED FOR "ALLEGEDLY DEFEATING THE ENDS OF JUSTICE" AND IS TO APPEAR IN COURT MARCH 22. BIKO IS BEING HELD WITHOUT BAIL AND HIS WIFE WAS REPORTEDLY TOLD SHE COULD NOT SEE HIM PRIOR TO APPEARANCE IN COURT.

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2. SECURITY POLICE HAVE PICKED UP SIX OTHER MEMBERS OF BPC IN KING WILLIAMS'S TOWN DURING MARCH 19 WEEKEND. BPC CHAIRMAN R. MAGIDA WAS PICKED UP AND RELEASED ON MARCH 20 AFTER GIVING ADDRESS AT "HEROE'S DAY," COMMEMORATION OF SHARPSVILLE INCIDENT IN 1960. POLICE ALSO ARRESTED AND ARE STILL HOLDING BPC LOCAL BRANCH

SECRETARY, MR. M. MBILINI, AND ORDINARY MEMBER, MR. K. MLINDA. MBLINI AND MLINDA ARE CHARGED WITH "CONDUCT LIKELY TO CAUSE RACIAL FRICTION". THREE ADDITIONAL BPC MEMBERS ARRESTED MARCH 20 IN MDANTSANE TOWNSHIP NEAR EAST LONDON ARE BPC REGIONAL DIRECTOR MR. M. MVOVO, AND ORDINARY BPC MEMBERS, MR. F. MBILINI AND MR. C. MARAI.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING RECENT EVENTS IN KING WILLIAM'S TOWN ARE NOT YET KNOWN, CRACKDOWN ON LOCAL BPC MAY BE SEEN AS PART OF GENERAL MOVE AGAINST BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY RECORDS, REGINALD MONWABISI MAGIDA, MZWANDILE ANDREW MBILINI, AND NOVANDILE MVOVO WERE DETAINED UNDER SECURITY LEGISLATION FOR 116, 110, AND 112 DAYS RESPECTIVELY LAST YEAR.

4. BIKO WAS ALSO DETAINED LAST YEAR FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND RELEASED IN EARLY DECEMBER STILL UNDER BANNING ORDERS. HE HAS BEEN WORKING IN ORGANIZING BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT AND OPEN IN HIS CONTACTS WITH SASO AND BPC PERSONNEL DESPITE RESTRICTIONS UNDER HIS BANNING. HE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HE HAD TWICE BEEN TO COURT BECAUSE OF INFRACTIONS OF HIS BAN. IT WAS EVIDENT TO EMBOFFS THAT HE WAS UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE AND HE FELT HIMSELF VULNERABLE TO SECURITY POLICE ACTION AT ANY TIME. HE HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR AN IV GRANT THIS YEAR.
BOWDLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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